



OKLAHOMA
WORKS

2017 ANNUAL ALUMNI CELEBRATION



If you want to be
successful, it's just
this simple.

Know what
you are doing.

Love what
you are doing.
And believe in what
you are doing.

- Will Rogers

2017 OKLAHOMA WORKS ALUMNI CELEBRATION SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Presentation of Colors

Star Spencer High School JROTC Color Guard

Welcome

Karen Davidson, President
Oklahoma Workforce Association

Introductions

Eddie Foreman, Executive Director
Central Oklahoma Workforce Development Board

Opening Speaker

Natalie Shirley, Cabinet Secretary of Education and Workforce Development
President, Oklahoma State University-Oklahoma City

Appreciation Symbol

Nathaniel Harding, President, Antioch Energy
Chair, Governor's Council for Workforce and Economic Development

Presentation of Awards

2017 Alumni of the Year

Nicholas Lalpui, Regional Administrator, Region IV, U.S. Department of Labor/ETA
Erin Risley-Baird, Executive Director, Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development

2017 Business Leaders of the Year

Donnalla Miller, Princess Transports, My Own HR Coach and OAWDB Chair
Nathaniel Harding, President, Antioch Energy
Chair, Governor's Council for Workforce and Economic Development

Presentation of Workforce Champion Awards

Donnalla Miller, Princess Transports, My Own HR Coach and OAWDB Chair
Nathaniel Harding, President, Antioch Energy
Chair, Governor's Council for Workforce and Economic Development

Closing Speaker

Nicholas E. Lalpui, Regional Administrator, Region IV
U.S. Department of Labor/Employment and Training Administration, Dallas, TX

Reception—Fourth Floor Rotunda



PRESENTATION OF COLORS

STAR SPENCER HIGH SCHOOL JROTC

JROTC is a leadership and citizenship program with a mission to motivate young people to be better citizens.

At Star Spencer High School we have worked hard to become well known in the community as a premier Color Guard unit. Our Color Guard has presented the national and state colors for the Alumni Celebration for the last five years, as well as at OKC Thunder home games, OKC NAACP banquets, the MLK parade, FCA awards ceremony, Star Spencer home basketball and football games, graduation, and numerous other events throughout the greater metro. We really enjoy bearing our nation's colors and paying tribute to our nation. We also do community support projects such as painting the Bobcat Paw prints in front of the school and helping with the VA annual flu shot clinics.

The picture above is of the presentation of the Colors at the Fellowship of Christian Athletes Award ceremony in 2013.



WELCOME

KAREN DAVIDSON, PRESIDENT **OKLAHOMA WORKFORCE** **ASSOCIATION**

Welcome to the 2017 Oklahoma Works Alumni Celebration!

Thank you honorees, family, friends and distinguished guests for making this day one where we truly demonstrate that integral to the success of the human spirit is both the determination of the individual and the ability of the public workforce system to provide both the path and the right opportunity.

The success of these honorees that we celebrate today is made possible by a workforce system, guided by business professionals, some of whom we are also honoring today, and by the dedicated staff that work directly with our customers on a daily basis. It is a system that provides the services that meet the needs of our customers. The volunteers that serve on local boards and workforce staff provide the knowledge, skills and resources for learning, earning and living.

Many of the honorees here today faced situations that seemed insurmountable and certainly they must have thought themselves without opportunity to overcome their personal barriers. The Oklahoma Works system was and will continue to be the place where many of our citizens can find the tools that will show them the steps they need to become productive and prosperous. Without the leadership of the business community helping us understand the skills and attributes that are needed by the workforce, however, we might be building steps that lead nowhere. It is this unique partnership between the public and private sectors that allow our workforce system in Oklahoma to be successful. With this partnership, the workforce system is able to provide customers the chance to learn, grow and obtain the workplace skills they need to be successful in providing a quality life for them and their families.

So once again, welcome to the 2017 Oklahoma Works Alumni Celebration of community partnerships working together to improve the lives of all Oklahomans.

Karen Davidson, President
Oklahoma Workforce Association



INTRODUCTION OF PRESENTERS

Eddie Foreman **CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER** **CENTRAL OKLAHOMA** **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

Eddie Foreman is the first Chief Executive Officer of the Central Oklahoma Workforce Investment Board, Inc. and has served in that capacity since February of 2005. He was responsible for establishing the Board's operations as a not-for-profit corporation.

From 2001 until 2005 he was the Executive Director of the Eastern Workforce Investment Board in Muskogee. Eddie retired from the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission (OESC) in 2001 with 30 years of service. At the time of his retirement he was the Division Director for Employment and Training where he was responsible for the statewide implementation of both the Welfare-to-Work program and the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. He also served as the Director of Job Corps for the agency from 1983 until 1997. During that time he won a National Award for Recruitment and Placement, the only state agency to earn that honor.

Eddie established the first statewide employer advisory council for OESC, designed to use the input of business representatives to improve the delivery of services by the agency.

Eddie graduated from Northeastern State University with a Bachelor's degree in Economics. He is a member of the Cherokee Nation, and the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals.

Additionally, he has been a member of Edmond All-Sports Board of Directors for 16 years serving as Chair for nine years, as well as a nine year member of Innovators, a national group of workforce board executives whose vision is to share, promote, and implement best practices.

Currently, Eddie is Secretary Treasurer of the Board of Directors for Oklahoma Employees Credit Union where he is past chairman and has been a board member for 16 years. He is also a member of the Oklahoma State Board of Credit Unions.



OPENING SPEAKER

Natalie Shirley
SECRETARY OF EDUCATION AND
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
PRESIDENT,
OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY-
OKLAHOMA CITY

Natalie Shirley concurrently serves as president of Oklahoma State University-Oklahoma City and as Oklahoma Secretary of Education and Workforce Development. Shirley was hired in May 2011 as the first female president in the OSU system. In January 2015, Shirley was appointed by Governor Mary Fallin to serve in her Cabinet as Secretary of Education and Workforce Development. In this position, Shirley is working with the Governor to implement the Oklahoma Works program, which is designed to increase educational attainment for Oklahomans in order to produce a more educated workforce to support and cultivate the state's economy.

From 2007-2011, she also served in Governor Brad Henry's Cabinet as Oklahoma Secretary of Commerce and Tourism. In this position, Shirley was responsible for the Workforce department and was the liaison between the governor, five major state agencies and more than 30 small agencies, authorities and institutions. During this time, she also served as Executive Director of the Department of Commerce, the state's leading economic development agency.

Formerly, Shirley was president of ICI Mutual in Washington, D.C., after serving in various leadership offices in the company. ICI Mutual is the captive insurance company of the mutual fund industry.

In addition to her dual roles as OSU-OKC President and Secretary of Education and Workforce Development, she also serves on the United Way board, as well as several business boards, including: the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce, Greater Oklahoma City Chamber Executive Committee, Oklahoma City Convention & Visitors Bureau, State Chamber of Oklahoma and the Oklahoma State Fair Board. She also serves on the Jasmine Moran Children's Museum Board of Trustees.

As an Oklahoma native, she graduated from Oklahoma State University and earned a law degree from the University of Oklahoma. Shirley lives in Oklahoma City, has six children and is a member of St. Luke's United Methodist Church.



PRESENTER

APPRECIATION SYMBOL

Nathaniel Harding
President, Antioch Energy
Chair, Governor's Council for
Workforce and
Economic Development

Nathaniel Harding is Founder & President of Antioch Energy, an upstream oil and gas company headquartered in Bricktown, Oklahoma City. He has been named one of the Most Admired CEOs in Oklahoma by the Journal Record. In 2013 he and his partner closed one of the largest private O&G asset transactions in Western Oklahoma. The company's past success has been chronicled in many publications, including the book "Prospects to Prosperity." Most recently, Antioch has secured \$100M in equity commitment and financing to grow in Oklahoma. Nathaniel has worked across all elements of petroleum engineering for major and independent companies in seven states plus offshore. He currently directs the exploration, drilling, production, and general engineering and operations activities. He also develops new talent, investors, and partners for exploration and development projects.

Nathaniel graduated cum laude from the University of Oklahoma with Russian and engineering degrees, and earned an MBA from Oklahoma City University. Before turning 30, he was selected to all three "40 under 40" outstanding achiever lists in the state. He is a decorated Air Force Captain and veteran of Afghanistan, where he was embedded with the US/NATO headquarters in collaboration with the Afghan government. Nathaniel has been published in multiple industry publications in the US and China, the latter as part of his Beijing-based joint venture with major Chinese oil companies.

In 2010 the Mayor of Oklahoma City appointed Nathaniel to the MAPS 3 Advisory Board—overseeing \$777M in city projects—and to chair the Streetcar Subcommittee. He has also been appointed by Governor Fallin to positions with Oklahoma Works and the Governor's Council for Workforce & Economic Development. Nathaniel serves on the boards for Oklahoma Contemporary, Oklahoma Independent Petroleum Association, Harold Hamm Diabetes Center, and others. He has been a Miss Oklahoma judge, track national champion, Russian orphanage translator, political party National Vice Chairman, and local TV talk show host. He and his wife, Amanda, and two daughters and a son live near downtown Oklahoma City.



2017 PRESENTER

ALUMNI AWARDS

Erin Risley-Baird

Executive DIRECTOR

**OKLAHOMA OFFICE OF
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

Dr. Erin Risley-Baird is the Executive Director of the Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development, the administrative entity of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) for the state of Oklahoma. In addition to her role as the state administrator of WIOA, she is also Executive Director of the Governor's Council for Workforce and Economic Development, the Governor-appointed, business led coalition of state, regional, and local agencies and organizations working to the efforts of economic and workforce development, education and training to create a world-class talent development system that meets the needs of students, job-seekers, workers, and businesses. Dr. Risley-Baird was formerly the Coordinator for Oklahoma Works, Governor Mary Fallin's Oklahoma initiative to align education and training with the modern workforce needs of the state.

Erin is a graduate of The University of Texas at Austin, with a Bachelor's Degree in Corporate Communication. She has a Master's degree in Political Communication from West Texas A&M University and has a Ph.D. in Communication and Public Policy from the University of Oklahoma.

Her research interests are primarily in political communication and health communication, with a focus on public policy communication, public event meaning creation, and resistance to official communication.

Her scholarly work is published in communication and social science journals, including the International Journal of Communication, Social Science Quarterly, and Western Journal of Communication. Her human-interest journalism work is found in The Oklahoman.



2017 PRESENTER

BUSINESS LEADER AWARDS

Donnalla Miller

Princess Transports

My Own HR Coach

**CHAIR, OKLAHOMA ASSOCIATION OF
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARDS**

Donnalla Miller, a human resources professional with diverse experience in both private and public sector environments, is the owner of Princess Transport, LLC and My Own HR Coach, LLC. Donnalla is also an Adjunct Professor for the Reach Higher Degree Completion Program at Southeastern Oklahoma State University. Her passion for helping industry and municipal/governmental entities succeed by offering business administration acumen and employee development and training is demonstrated through her entrepreneurial work and her willingness to volunteer time, talent and resources to many state and local workforce committees and boards.

As a member of the Governor's Council for Workforce and Economic Development, Donnalla has served as Chair of the Oklahoma Works taskforce, paving the way for a more effective and efficient workforce system in the State of Oklahoma. Donnalla also serves as Chair of the Southern Workforce Board and Chair of the Oklahoma Association of Workforce Development Boards.

Donnalla received her Bachelor of Science in HR Management from Southern Nazarene University and also earned her Master of Science in Training and Development from Texas A&M.



Closing Speaker
Nicholas E. Lalpui
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR
DALLAS, TX
EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING
ADMINISTRATION

Nicholas E. Lalpui is the Regional Administrator in the Dallas Employment and Training Administration (ETA) Regional Office. The Dallas (ETA) Regional Office covers 11 states: Arkansas, Colorado, Louisiana, Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, Utah and Wyoming. Since joining ETA in 1997, he has served on a number of national task forces, including the Workforce Investment Act Regulations and Implementation teams, Employment Service Performance Measures team, the National Business Learning Partnership team and the Innovate ETA team.

Mr. Lalpui joined ETA from Roadway Package System (which is now FED EX ground) where he was an Operations Manager at the Fort Worth, Texas hub. Prior to his employment at RPS, Mr. Lalpui served four years in the U.S. Army as an M-1 Abrams Main Battle Tank Crewman, serving in Operations Desert Shield and Storm.

Mr. Lalpui has a B.A. from the University of North Texas in Political Science.



2017 OUTSTANDING ALUMNI OF THE YEAR

CENTRAL

SALLY SULLIVAN* AND TERREL WRIGHT, JR.

EASTERN

RENDI PATTERSON* AND CHASSITY WALTERS

NORTHEAST

WILLIAM "CLAY" FULLHART* AND TUCKER JONES

NORTHWESTERN

JASON KENNEDY* AND CHRISTINA SHELITE

SOUTH CENTRAL

CARLOS DOMINGUEZ* AND JOHNATHON BAKER

SOUTHERN

KIDADA THOMPSON AND JOSEPH CHRISTIE

SOUTHWEST

MATTHEW MAILLET

TULSA

KAILA BLOSS* AND MIA SHAPEARL SCOTT

* INDICATES SPEAKER



2017 OUTSTANDING ALUMNI OF THE YEAR

Central Oklahoma Workforce Development Area

SALLY SULLIVAN

Sally Sullivan's journey with Oklahoma Works started in June of 2015. Sally came to workforce seeking services as a job seeker looking to return to the workforce.

When Sally first visited with me she was looking at returning to work doing "Just about anything" that would pay her bills. Sally was a Licensed Practical Nurse and had a successful career when she became a full-time caregiver to her father. After her father passed away, she was faced with a difficult decision of going back into the labor force with outdated skills as her nursing license had expired.

Through numerous discussions, the idea was born that Sally could go back to school to retrain as a Nurse but she had to find the right school. She researched high and low and through her perseverance she found out that she could attend the nursing program at OU but would need to complete some additional assessments for the school. Due to the time it took for all these processes, she had to be re-enrolled into the WIOA program only to find out that the Bachelor's of Nursing degree program through OUHSC was not on WIOAs list of approved training.

Sally was provided information to work with the school to get the training WIOA approved. Fortunately, because Sally was on top of things and the school was more than willing to assist her, the training program was WIOA approved in a matter of days. Sally was once again enrolled into the program, her eligibility approved, followed by approval of her Individual Training Account.

Sally had the support of her family who also assisted her through this journey. Initially, when Sally started her training, she was required to be at the Cameron University campus in Lawton on some Saturdays. Not having her own transportation posed challenges for Sally but she persevered. Sally's family members took turns driving her to Lawton and back whenever she was required to be at the Cameron University Campus.

Through this professional and personal journey, she never gave up; Sally's positive attitude and her drive to success kept her motivated. Sally stayed optimistic through all of the challenges she faced stating "things have a way of working out". Things did work out for Sally – today I am proud to say that Sally Sullivan is just not Sally Sullivan. She is Sally Sullivan, RN BSN, a proud OU graduate of 2017.

Sally graduated with honors from Oklahoma University Health Science Center as a Registered Nurse, licensed to practice in the state of Oklahoma.

She is a role model for everybody who is afraid to take the first step to get their career started thinking the "ship has sailed" and it is too late. Today, Sally, after graduating in May, began working as a RN at Mercy Hospital and it is an honor to nominate her for the "Workforce Alumni Celebration".



2017 OUTSTANDING ALUMNI OF THE YEAR

Central Oklahoma Workforce Development Area

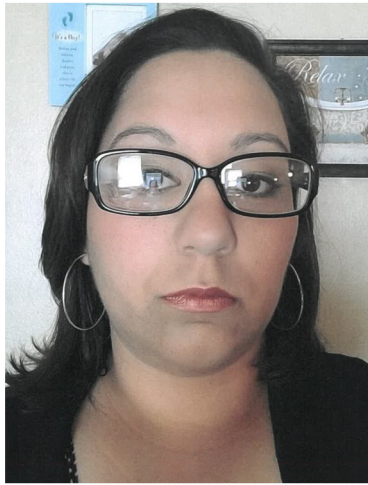
Terrel Wright, Jr.

Terrel enrolled into the WIOA program as an In School Youth. He was a junior in high school at the time living at home with his mother and six siblings. He was basic skills deficient in math and had very little work experience. Terrel's employment goal at the time was Dietitian/Nutritionist.

He participated in various programs while in the program such as Summer Employment Opportunities, Work Experience, and Occupational Skills Training. He completed all of the requirements and gained a high school diploma.

After completing high school he moved on to his first occupational skills training in Long Term Care Aide at Wes Watkins Technology Center where he received a CNA license on 6/16/2016 and the following school term he enrolled into the Surgical Technologist training program there at Wes Watkins which he completed on 5/23/2017 with a certification in Surgical Technology.

Terrel has pushed forward to achieve his goals although having many obstacles in his path and has now found employment with the Reach Program as a CNA in Okemah while he waits for the new hospital to open so he can apply for a Surgical Technologist position and utilize his skills learned in training. He stated he is very grateful for the help he received while in the WIOA program and feels that the support he received from everyone in his life including the WIOA program is what helped him get through it all.



2017 OUTSTANDING ALUMNI OF THE YEAR

**Eastern Oklahoma
Workforce Development Area**

RENDI PATTERSON

My name is Rendi Patterson. I am 29 years old, and have a 4-year-old son. I currently work for the Okmulgee Chamber of Commerce and am attending Northeastern State University, working towards a Bachelor's of Science in Health Care Administration. Two years ago, I never thought any of this would be possible. I was a single parent living with family, practically homeless. I had not had a job or a degree. I hadn't worked for almost 2 years. I was destitute and couldn't find work. I applied for TANF and was told about the M-Power program through Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology. There I met people like me who were basically starting over. While completing my Associates of Science in Business, I heard about Oklahoma Workforce and applied for that program. With the help of Sharri Belcher and Katelynn Quillin, I soon realized how much potential I truly have. With the support of my family, friends, career managers and M-Power family, I earned an Associates of Science in Business with honors from Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology and I am well on my way to completing my Bachelor. These programs have helped me so much. These programs have not just helped me financially, but also have helped me feel like I can accomplish anything. The people in these programs make you feel like family. Without the help of Oklahoma Works, M-Power, and the people working there, who I now call my friends, I would not be where I am at today.



2017 OUTSTANDING ALUMNI OF THE YEAR

Eastern Oklahoma Workforce Development Area

CHASSITY WALTERS

My name is Chassity Walters; I'm currently 19 years of age. I have a beautiful 3 year old daughter and a wonderful husband. I've been through so much in my early life. I lost my mom on my 15th birthday. I then got with my child's father and we were together for four years. I got pregnant and dropped out of school my freshman year. When we relocated to Stilwell, Oklahoma, I realized that I needed to support myself and my daughter so I made some huge changes in mine and my daughter's life.

I heard about the workforce center and I let Amber know what was going on. I was telling her about my life goals, what I wanted to do in my life and that I just needed a little help to get there. Thankfully for her and all the other coworkers, they helped and encouraged me.

It wasn't that hard for me to know and decide which career path I wanted to take. When my mother got sick and she was put on hospice; I was watching them come in and out of the house. They were showing me the ropes. They taught me how to do most things and watching someone else take care of someone who meant the absolute world to me, I knew right then and there that this is what I wanted to do. I wanted to take care of people.

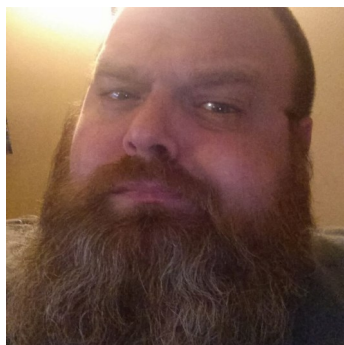
Amber helped me enroll in the WIOA program on October 28, 2016. I wanted to reach many goals. And I did. I was rocking it. I began participating in the work experience at the Stilwell Nursing Home on December 6, 2016, while taking one day a week off to dedicate that time to my GED class. I took my 1st GED test, Reasoning through Language Arts, on November 30, 2016. I passed that with a 151 score. The 2nd GED test, Social Studies, I passed on January 4, 2017, with a score of 153. While still participating in the work experience program, I took my 3rd GED test, Science on March 15, 2017, passing with a 150.

My work experience ended on April 1, 2017 and I was hired as a full time employee at the Stilwell Nursing Home. My first day was April 9, 2017. I was making \$9.00 an hour.

I'm a Cherokee Citizen and Amber and her crew was able to help me obtain my CNA training at the Indian Capital Technology Center which was sponsored by the Cherokee Nation's Career Services. I completed the training and achieved my CNA on May 8, 2017.

I took my Post TABE assessment on May 16, 2017, when I scored proficient; raising it from a 7.4 to an 11.0 grade equivalency. I was then ready to get my Career Readiness Certificate, so I took the WorkKeys test on May 19, 2017, and scored Silver.

While working my full-time job, I still had to focus on my GED because I had one more test to take. I wanted to pass it so bad because math was my worst subject. On May 24, 2017, I decided to attempt to take my GED Mathematical Reasoning test. I attained my GED goal by passing with a score of 148!



2017 OUTSTANDING ALUMNI OF THE YEAR

Northeast Oklahoma Workforce Development Area

WILLIAM "CLAY" FULLHART

Thursday, April 23, 2015 was a horrible day in my life. At 4:00 a.m. while preparing to go to work, I received a phone call that my dad would not wake up. I drove from Claremore to Tulsa to find that my dad had passed away. Four days later we laid to rest the most important man in my life that had ever lived. This is an important part of my story because four days after my dad's funeral, while on bereavement, I received a call from my boss. Usually an upbeat guy, but by the tone of his voice I could tell something was not right. I knew that he was making a difficult call to tell me that I was being laid off. In one week, I had lost my dad and my job of 18 years.

There I sat mourning two deaths, my father and my job. After 18 years with the same company, I had nowhere to go and darkness set in. I was faced with the important questions that anyone is faced with, "What do I do now?" "How am I going to pay my bills?" "What do I tell my family?"

There was nothing I could do but go home and tell my wife and two sons that the security they had always known was gone. I had to face the loss a second time when I looked on my sons' faces and realized they had just lost a grandpa and now they were being told we might lose everything else. My one saving grace was my wife as she told everything was going to be fine and somehow by the way she said it I knew it was going to be. Immediately I went to the workforce center and filed for unemployment and took a loan from my 401K (not the brightest move) and paid off some monthly bills. With my immediate affairs settled, I was able to settle my dad's affairs and move on.

As life was a little more stable, I had to start thinking about the future. During this time I interviewed with at least 25 different companies for a supervisor position, and I heard the same thing over and over, "Your qualifications are great, your work history is great, your references spoke highly of you, but we are moving in the direction of hiring someone with a college degree." Something of which I did not have, I had always scraped my way up the ladder, not stepping onto the rungs with a degree. The idea of going to school at this time was out, I was barely paying the bills. I was back to square one, four weeks before Christmas and I had no job or income, needless to say 2015 was not turning into a banner year for me and my family.

The beginning of December and I was filing again for unemployment. By a chance meeting with my friend Rob at Walmart one day, he told me he was going back to school on TAA. I knew the company had applied for TAA and received notice for employees in October but didn't know what it was about. I called the Claremore Workforce office and they set me up with an intake. I went through the intake process with OESC then was referred to Angie Ryan and thought this may be a good opportunity. After talking to my wife about all the pros and cons, she encouraged me to go to college. With everything else that had happened that year, what did I have to lose?

So it was set, I had to choose a college, take my ACT equivalency tests, get transcripts from another college, get enrolled, and get my books all before classes started on January 11 (with a two week Christmas break to add to the pressure). I was pointed in the direction of OSUIT. OSUIT made the transition easy, but then I found out I was also going to be attending RSU for my general education classes, so I had to do all these things twice before January 11. I did it with the help of people such as Angie Ryan, Karla Jones, and Sheila Walker: the hard work they put in for their clients, they waded through the paperwork, answered all the endless questions and they went to bat for me when the colleges messed up, and made themselves available to make sure I just had to put forth the effort to study and succeed.

With the support of my wife and two sons and the endless support of the TAA staff, here I now have 78 college credit hours, a 4.0 GPA, and a paid internship starting at more than \$20.00 per hour that will more than likely lead into a paid position. All the sacrifice, studying, and issues were worth it. Finishing my degree has opened up a world that I didn't know existed. I have learned new skills, made lifelong friends, and finally feel that the darkness that fell on me in May of 2015 has lifted.



2017 OUTSTANDING ALUMNI OF THE YEAR

Northeast Oklahoma Workforce Development Area

Tucker Jones

When I came to Oklahoma I was unemployed and I had 6 college hours from a local community college. But my Colorado WIOA Career Manager said she would call her counterpart in Oklahoma and see if I could continue to receive services. A few days after I arrived in the state, I visited the Miami Workforce Center and spoke Tammy Perry, OESC staff member, got enrolled in Oklahoma Job Match and was referred to James Pliant, Career Manager, Odle Management, Title 1. Together we developed a plan of services.

The most important services I received were my placements in paid work experience positions as well as my pending placement at Talking Leaves Job Corps. The paid work experiences consisted of two placements. The first, at G.A.R. Cemetery, helped me to better understand myself and laid a foundation for work ethic I didn't have before. The second, at Ketcher-Kelley Animal Shelter, which I am still working at, helped me to further solidify that work ethic. It also helped me with focus, self-esteem, and other crucial mental skills. Finally, it helped me realize that my love of animals could lead into a career someday, as I very much enjoy caring for the wonderful animals that call the shelter home.

Since I have been completing services through Oklahoma Works, I feel more confident and capable overall. I no longer feel like my disability is any sort of crutch or obstacle for me, but rather a challenge that can be, and gradually is being, overcome. I have also begun to learn many crucial employment skills I thought were utterly beyond me for my entire life beforehand. Also, since the program got me out among people, it helped me become a good deal more socially confident as well, an asset I wholly lacked beforehand. Overall, I am far more prepared to be a productive, working member of society after completing the program as opposed to before.

If I had one thing to say to people seeking help through this program, it would be to work, first and foremost, on being kind to yourself, patient with yourself. It can feel very degrading knowing, coming in, that you need outside assistance with getting a job when most people seem fine with going through the process themselves with no extra preparation beyond what school gives them. Realize that this does not make you less of a person. In fact, by seeking help through this program you are being brave and humbling yourself to a degree many people could not bring themselves to. By sticking with the program and being patient with yourself, you will then be able to achieve a better life.

Everyone has a place in this world, somewhere they feel at home, passionate about their work, and wake up every day excited to contribute to the world in whatever meaningful way they've found works for them. Programs like this help very much to achieve that.



2017 OUTSTANDING ALUMNI OF THE YEAR

Northwestern Oklahoma Workforce Development Area

Jason Kennedy

Jason Kennedy began his medical career while serving in the US Navy. Jason attended a 14-week school for Hospital Corpsman Class A and was assigned to National Naval Medical Center's Department of Medicine in Bethesda, MD. Sometime after Jason and his family relocated to Stillwater, he took an evening class for a basic certification as an EMT. Jason was unable, even with these trainings and certifications, to provide adequately for his family. He and his wife had made the decision that she would stay home to raise their young children, and the wages were not enough to support their family. Jason was receiving assistance through the Department of Human Services for SNAP benefits, SoonerCare, and WIC prior to training.

Jason sought assistance for the Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN) program at Meridian Technology Center in Stillwater through the Stillwater Oklahoma Works office, and the adult program of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Jason fell under the highest priority for service because he was considered to be a low income veteran. Jason began his training in December of 2015. Besides assisting Jason with tuition and books, he also needed assistance in obtaining additional program requirements, such as uniforms and supplies to complete the clinical portion of the training.

Jason was an excellent student committed to his training. During his training, class instruction, and clinicals, Jason maintained a full-time job with Stillwater Medical Center in the ICU department. During his training, Jason had several featured photographs and an article produced by Meridian Technology Center to highlight his progress in their training program. Jason completed his training and was licensed through the Oklahoma Board of Nursing in April 2017. Jason continued working at the Stillwater Medical Center after completing training along with a part time position at AMC Urgent Care. In addition to his current jobs, in July he accepted a position as a full time night charge nurse at Southern Oaks Care Center in Pawnee. Jason reports that obtaining his LPN was just a step in his career path. He is currently attending Northern Oklahoma University in Stillwater to prepare himself for the LPN to BSN program at Oklahoma University. He hopes to be able to enroll in the Bachelor's program by spring 2019. With his drive and dedication, career planner believes that Jason will be able to achieve any goal he sets for himself!



2017 OUTSTANDING ALUMNI OF THE YEAR

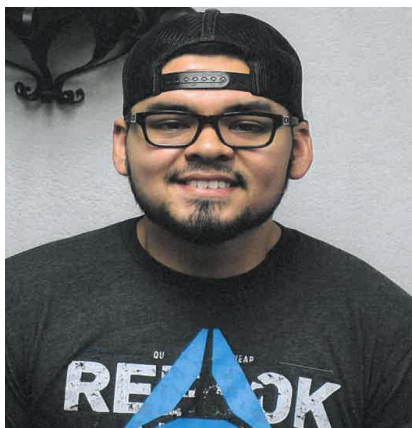
Northwestern Oklahoma Workforce Development Area

Christina Shelite

In December of 2016, WIOA Youth Service Specialist met with Christina, after she was referred by the TANF program at DHS. Christina was an agreeable young lady who shared that she had just moved from Del City, OK, with her 3 small children and was living with her grandmother in Enid. Although she had dropped out of high school following the birth of her first child and subsequent marriage, her TABE scores showed that she was a bright young lady. Eventually, Christina opened up that during her marriage, she was not allowed to work or have friends. When her husband lost his job and eventually abandoned the household, she made the move to Enid, looking for a brighter future.

It was clear to her youth service specialist that she had definite potential but lacked confidence. Upon enrollment, there was a quick move to place her in a work experience. Christina attended a Work Readiness workshop where they created a resume, discussed ways to highlight her abilities, and participated in mock interviews. The Enid Workforce Office was more than willing to afford Christina an opportunity to gain some work experience. The WIOA Youth Program provided a supportive service to purchase work attire, and in no time, a confident young lady had emerged. During her first month, Christina attained a GOLD CRC, received excellent ratings on all 3 of her work experience evaluations, and was referred to the Youth Build Program. In an effort to help her and her children transition to Enid, a supportive service referral to the YMCA and Leonardo's Children Museum were submitted. Christina was given scholarships to both. Additionally, she was able to utilize CDSA's Baby Basics Diaper Program to get free diapers for two of her children.

Christina was accepted into the CDSA YouthBuild Program in February. She attained near perfect attendance and diligently worked on completing her credits. While in the program, she stood out as a leader amongst her peers, always willing to help out her fellow classmates and staff. While in YouthBuild, she attained her Forklift Certificate, HBI Pact Construction Certificate, OSHA 10 hr Safety Training Certificate, and became 1st Aid/CPR Certified. On September 1, 2017, Christina proudly attended her YouthBuild graduation, supported by her family and friends. She was given the recognition of being one of two star construction students. She also accepted her high school diploma and graduated with a 3.5 GPA. Christina was one of a few students who also earned all 450 of her AmeriCorps hours which provided her with \$1527.45 Segal Educational Award to go towards any educational institution of her choice. Currently, Christina is continuing with the YouthBuild Program, working as part of an elite summer crew, where she will continue to use her construction skills to complete the rehabilitation of the YouthBuild project house. She has job opportunities lined up to continue working in the construction field, which has turned out to be her passion.



2017 OUTSTANDING ALUMNI OF THE YEAR

**South Central Oklahoma
Workforce Development Area**

Carlos Dominguez

Carlos is a peer mentor working at OU Medical Center as a volunteer while he is currently working on obtaining his Bachelor's Degree in Psychology. He has certifications in peer mentoring with OU Medical Center, United Spinal and Reeve Foundation. Carlos was involved in a car accident in 2013 and was hit by a drunk driver, which left him paralyzed. He had an injury of an incomplete C6, but is able to utilize his upper body. He competes for Cross Fit and spends his spare time at school and in the gym.

Carlos received services from the Comanche and Apache Tribal VR programs as well as DRS. He utilized both agencies for his financial burden with tuition and books for school at Cameron University, his wheelchair parts, his modified van and driving school. Carlos has a huge amount of support from his family and he continues to be grateful and have a positive attitude. Both of his parents were able to go back to work once he was out of the hospital and working with the VR programs.

Carlos says, "All services were a great value to my health and independence. The most valuable for my career is college training. I did receive drivers training and a modified van which help me get around."

Carlos states that "DRS and the VR Tribal programs helped me regain his independence." "You don't understand what having independence is until you don't have it." "I don't feel trapped any longer and I am getting out there." "I have different challenges every single day, but it is like teaching an old dog new tricks." "There is more to life and this experience has humbled me."



2017 OUTSTANDING ALUMNI OF THE YEAR

South Central Oklahoma Workforce Development Area

Johnathon Baker

I was living on my own at the age of 16, going to school and trying to maintain a part time job. I struggled for about two years, then the summer before my senior year in high school I was working in the watermelon fields in Rush Springs where I met someone that took me in and let me live with him. After the summer it was difficult finding a part time job in Rush Springs that would allow me to go to school. The librarian at my school recommended that I go to the Workforce Center, they helped me set up an OKJobMatch account so I could look up jobs and from there I was referred to ResCare and the WIOA program. It was truly a blessing that I was connected with them; they gave me the opportunity to do a work experience through the Grady County Barn so I could gain valuable work experience and work towards supporting myself financially. They also talked with me to help me set up a plan for after graduation. Two weeks after I graduated they paid for me to go to truck driving school at Arbuckle, where I could live there during the training. They also provided a gas card for me so I could travel back and forth on the weekends. Six weeks later I obtained my CDL and they helped me find a job. The WIOA program gave me the drive, ability, and the starting point I needed to start my life.

Without ResCare I wouldn't have gone to CDL school, I wouldn't have been able to afford it. I wouldn't have a home, car, or job to support myself. The program is amazing at helping people who do not have the assets to find good jobs and it creates the opportunity for that which is amazing. Now I am doing great and ResCare started the entire process. It was an experience and privilege to be on the program.

If anyone has the opportunity to join this program or knows someone in need I would highly suggest it. The staff is amazing; they gave me options and checked in on me a lot. It's not just a paycheck to them; they are invested in your future.



2017 OUTSTANDING ALUMNI OF THE YEAR

**Southern Oklahoma
Workforce Development Area**

Kidada Thompson

Kidada Thompson knows the meaning of the Oklahoma Works services and the importance of those services to be successful. Kidada has been working at McDonald's in Ada, OK. She looked for a job for 3 years by herself and finally got some assistance through Brenda Brashear at DRS through a job coach. At that time, Not Just Jobs helped her with applications, interviews and on the job training. Her job coach, Jamie, went with her to McDonalds to assist with her interview. McDonalds hired her on the spot and she then went to a training provided by them for 3 days where the job coach, Jamie was there to assist her with her employment needs for learning the new job.

Kidada had some barriers to overcome with her disability. She didn't have transportation and DRS, along with the job coach, taught her how to take a cab and bus, how to dress, groom, take care of herself. She states "They taught me life skills in general." I felt inhibited because I don't concentrate with a lot of people around and they taught me techniques to reduce the stress and triggers that I may have." During her time of job search, DRS collaborated with Workforce, North Hills Center and DHS for Kidada. They provided her classes on managing stress, hygiene, missing work, coping skills, medical services and, of course, food stamps. They gave her a folder of ideas to help with her stress. Kidada states "I received Career Pathways training and it was a great learning tool for me." She further states "obtaining employment through DRS has helped me improve the quality of my life and my confidence is better." "I couldn't reach my family before and now I am able to buy things." "I take the cab more and I take better care of myself now." "I enjoy being independent and taking care of myself." DRS collaborated with Workforce, North Hills Center and DHS for Kidada.



2017 OUTSTANDING ALUMNI OF THE YEAR

Southern Oklahoma Workforce Development Area

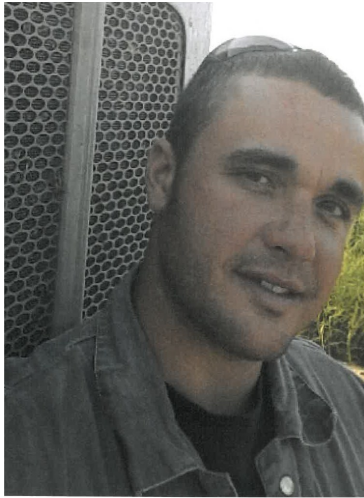
Joseph Christie

Joseph came into the Oklahoma Works office on May 21 2014 with his grandmother, Mrs. Lonna Shorter, where he was referred to the Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Program Talent Development Specialist, Donna Crosslin. His grandmother was very concerned about his welfare. They both discussed with Donna that Joseph lived with her sometimes, with his mother, and with various friends. He wasn't homeless yet, but he soon would be. Joseph was a high school drop-out, and he was struggling with daily life.

Joseph agreed that he would try our program. Joseph was placed on a job on the Summer Employment program. He did very well and was taking the job seriously. His family life was deteriorating at this time, and he wasn't able to hold his job. Joseph had a young son that he had been keeping but events led up to him not being able to see his son. He did find a job on his own for a short time, but wasn't able to keep it due to family issues and no transportation. By this time he had moved from his grandmother's home and had lived with several people, none of which worked out, so he found himself homeless, and jobless.

Joseph then decided he needed help and sought mental health counseling on his own. Joseph was then referred to Job Corps in Guthrie, Oklahoma. It was during this time he spent at Job Corps that Joseph worked for, and received his High School Diploma. He also chose to study for and train to be in the Cleet Security Guard class. He received a certificate in Security and now holds a job for Titan Security. Joseph and his son are now living together again and couldn't be happier.

Joseph shared that he would be interested in taking further training at Southern Technology Center in Ardmore, so that he can earn a better income for himself and his son. Joseph says "Thank You to the Youth Program in Ardmore Oklahoma."



2017 OUTSTANDING ALUMNI OF THE YEAR

Southwest Oklahoma Workforce Development Area

Matthew Maillet

My situation was a rough one. I didn't have anyone I could rely on in my life. I was flat broke, and I didn't see a very good outlook for the future for my son and me. I was barely able to pay the bills.

I heard from people in the community that had gone to the local Workforce Office in Altus about Oklahoma Works. I decided to see what they could do to help change my future.

The first service I received through Oklahoma Works was an assessment of my skills. The staff enrolled me in Arbuckle Truck Driving School in Ardmore, Oklahoma to get my CDL License and certificate. The course was six weeks long. Oklahoma Works helped with transportation, job placement and job advancement. What helped me the most was that I could get my CDL from a good school without having to pay for it out of pocket because I didn't have the resources to do it. What the program offers is practical and rewarding.

My life has changed for the better. I am currently making \$19 an hour driving a truck. I have been employed with my company for 2 ½ months. I am getting financially stable, and my son is happier. Everything has changed for us, and it has been a blessing. Now, I am able to pay everything on time, and have extra left over for savings.

I think everyone who is eligible for the program should make the sacrifices to go into the Oklahoma Works offices and take the assessments. I am so glad and thankful I did this.



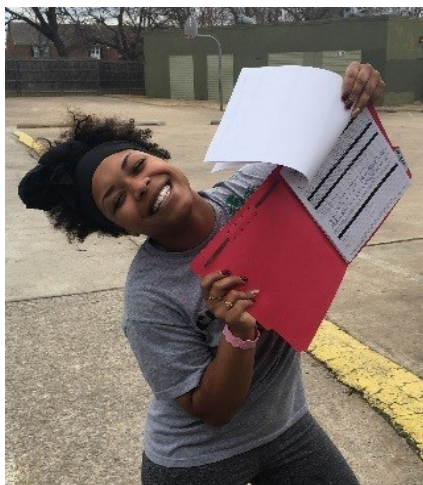
2017 OUTSTANDING ALUMNI OF THE YEAR Tulsa Workforce Development Area Kaila Bloss

Kaila Bloss was 29 years of age and a mother of three beautiful boys when she was first referred to Workforce Tulsa through the Women in Recovery Program (WIR) for a work experience with Workforce Tulsa's Service Provider. Prior to Kaila's enrollment into the Workforce Tulsa Adult Program, she was working part-time as a server at Golden Corral and was in her second semester at Tulsa Community College for classes toward her Associates Degree in Business Administration. Kaila's initial drive to enroll into the Adult Program was to gain work experience that would lead to self-sustainable employment, since she was soon to graduate from the WIR Program and step-out into the workforce again. However, little did Kaila know that her work experience would ignite her passion for helping others and propel her into a career in the workforce industry.

Once Kaila enrolled into the Adult Program, she promptly began her 3-month work experience as an Intake Specialist, which allowed her to assume the roles of greeting and directing the flow of customers, providing valuable information regarding services, and completing the triage process for Intake. Kaila's dedication as an Intake Specialist proved in her favor by allowing her work experience contract to be extended for another 3-months. Kaila not only completed each duty and responsibility as an Intake Specialist with remarkable evaluations, but she began to voice her passion of working with young adults and was given the opportunity to cross-train with the Youth Program to gain more knowledge and experience.

Throughout Kaila's work experience, she received the support needed from Workforce Tulsa to navigate her career pathway through occupational assessments, along with receiving support from the Department from Human Services for SNAP Benefits. Although, Kaila stated that the most important service she received through Workforce Tulsa was the encouragement and guidance from the Leadership Team, who helped her grow professionally by allowing her to cross-train between departments and believing in her every step of the way.

Kaila has recently accepted a full-time position with the Service Provider for Workforce Tulsa as an Interim Career Navigator for the Adult & Dislocated Worker Program. Through Workforce Tulsa's partnerships, Kaila's life has been changed from working part-time as a server, to helping others obtain the same long-term, self-sustainable employment that she was once seeking. Kaila states, "I am grateful for all of the opportunities that Workforce Tulsa has given me. In addition, I have successfully graduated from the Women in Recovery Program. I look forward to what the future holds for me!"



2017 OUTSTANDING ALUMNI OF THE YEAR

Tulsa Workforce Development Area

Mia Shapearl Scott

Mia was 23 years of age when she was referred by her cousin to the Workforce Tulsa Youth Program. At that time, Mia was a single mother of two children, ages one and two, and was staying with a cousin with no reliable transportation. Mia was supporting herself and her children by working full-time at a local Taco Bell making minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour. Prior to enrolling into the Youth Program, Mia knew she had a passion for the Healthcare sector and already had a vision for herself and her family on obtaining her Certified Nursing Assistant Certification to start her career pathway to becoming a Registered Nurse.

Upon Mia enrolling into the Youth Program, her first step to prepare her for occupational skills training was to complete a week of Career Readiness consisting of 20-hours of Academic Enrichment and 20-hours of Work Readiness Training then take part in a 6-week work experience. Mia successfully completed the Career Readiness Week and was hosted by the Tulsa Regional Chamber for her work experience.

Mia increased her evaluation scores throughout her work experience and was not only professionally supported by her supervisor, but was also aided with childcare services through the Department of Human Services. However, Mia states that, “the most important service I received was my Career Manager’s guidance with all the necessary steps I had to take as well as all of the options I was given and provided with to better prepare and assist me in the work readiness aspects of finding my own career pathway.”

Due to Mia’s success and drive, she was approved to be funded through the Youth Program for occupational skills training as a Certified Nursing Assistant at Wings Healthcare Training, which included the necessary books, tools, and testing fees needed for the program. Mia passed the State Exam and earned her Home Health Aide/Long Term Care Certification and was placed at St. Francis Hospital as a Nurse Technician on the Senior Specialty Unit making \$11.75 per hour.

Mia’s life, along with the lives of her family members have changed drastically in the matter of a year. Upon finding employment, Mia is now enrolled in prerequisite classes at Tulsa Community College for Registered Nursing. Since Mia has completed the Youth Program, she has been able to live more comfortably in a way that she never has been able to before. Mia states, “the experience was worth it for me. I am not telling you it’s going to be easy, I am telling you it’s going to be worth it. Do not stop when you are tired, stop when you are finished!”

2017

Business Leaders of the Year

CENTRAL
DAVE HUSTED
M-D BUILDING PRODUCTS

EASTERN
STILWELL NURSING HOME

NORTHEAST
KARI MACE RUSSELL
RAE CORPORATION

NORTHWESTERN
RACHEL HARRIS
CDSA

SOUTH CENTRAL
CHUCK RALLS
CITY OF COMANCHE, OK

SOUTHERN
HAROLYNN WOFFORD
PSO

SOUTHWEST
MIKE HIXSON
AEP/PSO

TULSA
REN BARGER
TULSA HUB



2017
BUSINESS LEADER OF THE YEAR

Central Oklahoma
Workforce Development Area

Dave Husted
M-D Building Products

As an active volunteer and advisory board member, Dave Husted supports an industry sector approach to workforce development.

By serving as a member of Central Oklahoma's Warehouse & Distribution Employer Advisory Board, Mr. Husted provides valuable business insights into his industry. He has promoted employment in the Warehouse & Distribution sector by conducting plant tours at the M-D Building Products location in Oklahoma City, by participating in employer workshops, and by speaking at school career day events. He also participates as a mentor in the SmartWork Ethics workshops that are sponsored by the Central Oklahoma Workforce Innovation Board (COWIB).

Additionally, Mr. Husted serves as a volunteer board member for ReMerge of Oklahoma County, a comprehensive female diversion program designed to transform pregnant women and mothers facing incarceration into productive citizens. ReMerge works alongside the Oklahoma Department of Corrections and the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services to reduce the rate at which women are incarcerated. Participants are offered evidence based treatment to address mental and behavioral health, trauma, and substance abuse addiction. Upon successful completion of the program, ReMerge graduates have the extraordinary opportunity to have their felony charges dismissed.

Mr. Husted has been instrumental in mentoring the COWIB's Business Services Team. His community involvement has resulted in a vibrant Employer Advisory Board. Through his strong support of ReMerge and his volunteer activities with COWIB's SmartWork Ethics program, he helps young workers overcome barriers and achieve success in both their family and work circumstances.



2017
BUSINESS LEADER OF THE YEAR
Eastern Oklahoma
Workforce Development Area
Stilwell Nursing Home

Our mission statement at Stilwell Nursing Home is this:

Dignity, respect and compassionate care.

Every resident. Every person. Every day.

We take this to heart each and every day. Not only do we follow these words for our residents, but with each other as well. Stilwell Nursing Home is pleased to collaborate with the Oklahoma Workforce program to help connect prospective employees with opportunities to work in the healthcare field. This program gives us every opportunity to put our mission statement into action.

With a continued state and national shortage of healthcare workers, our partnership has definitely helped us meet staffing needs. We have successfully trained three applicants who have become long term employees. The Workforce program helps guide individuals down a career path and because of our partnership, we help them continue on that path by offering educational training. While the prospective employee gains meaningful experience at the nursing home, we get the benefit of building a relationship to help them develop into productive employees.

It is gratifying to watch people who have struggled to find a job develop into compassionate and caring employees. In turn, our residents get care from people that have a better understanding of what is expected of them as our employees.

The partnership between Stilwell Nursing Home and the Oklahoma Works program has been very successful. We are proud to be part of a program that advances the community effort of bringing people and business together.



2017 BUSINESS LEADER OF THE YEAR

Northeast Oklahoma Workforce Development Area

Kari Mace Russell
RAE Corporation

In 2015, Kari Mace Russell accepted the nomination to serve on the Northeast Workforce Development Board, representing manufacturing sectors in Mayes County. Kari is an active and engaged NEWDB member, serving on the full board and executive committee. Kari also serves on the newly formed Regional Planning Board. She has been a driving force in the community in support of the Workforce System and Oklahoma Works partners. As RAE Corp HR Manager, she has required all job seekers seeking employment at RAE Corp to register with OKJobMatch.com and RAE Corp lists all job openings with Oklahoma Works for prescreening and referrals. Members of the Title 1 service provider - Odle Management Group, Wagner-Peyser - OESC and Cherokee Nation Career Services have all participated in hiring events/job fairs with RAE Corporation in 2016-2017 that have resulted in over 50 additional employees being added from the community. RAE Corporation has utilized the On-the-Job training program through the Oklahoma Works to provide employment opportunities to eligible job seekers.

RAE Corp collaborates all hiring events and job fair events with Oklahoma Works partners including the Title I Service Provider – Odle Management Group, OKDRS, Wagner Peyser – OESC and Cherokee Nation Career Services. Kari is actively engaged in the Northeast Workforce Area and participates in the partner meetings through New Day New Way to advocate for business needs and provides valuable input to Oklahoma Works partners.

Kari Mace Russell was one of the employers providing significant input and driving the conversations regarding the Employability Skills Training initiative in the northeast area. The Employability Skills Training was created in response to employer request in northeast Oklahoma and completed in partnership with Northeast Tech Center, OESC, DRS and business leaders to create a curriculum designed to address the critical employability skills that are needed for on-the-job success and onboarding support for new hires. RAE Corp, through Kari's leadership, has utilized Interview Stream, a valuable resource provided at no charge to local employer by the NEWDB. Interview Stream creates the opportunity for employers to conduct remote interviews and make job offers to job candidates.

Kari's impact in NE Oklahoma is tremendous. Kari leads the charge in critical conversations related to workforce development and educational activities through her role as a member of the NEWDB and in her role on the NE Regional Planning Board. Kari has been instrumental in RAE Corporation's participation in the local On-the-Job Training program. Through the utilization of On-the-Job Training, RAE Corp has created numerous opportunities for job seekers to develop skills leading to wealth generation in the region.



2017 BUSINESS LEADER OF THE YEAR

Northwestern Oklahoma Workforce Development Area

**Rachel Harris
CDSA**

Rachel Harris is the current program coordinator for the YouthBuild program at CDSA in Enid, Oklahoma. YouthBuild is a program that assists youth to obtain a high school diploma, and gain construction trade skills in the pre-apprenticeship program. YouthBuild is a direct contract through DOL, and CDSA has been awarded the exclusive contract in the state of Oklahoma. Rachel demonstrates an amazing effort working with the YouthBuild students to help them recognize their career goals, and helping them to turn their dreams into realities. From encouraging students to complete their high school diploma, to finding resources to assist with basic needs, Rachel is continuously working to help the participants better themselves, and become more work ready. Because YouthBuild falls under WIOA, Rachel also works with local businesses and schools or training facilities to place youth into employment or education.

Before becoming the YouthBuild Coordinator, Rachel worked as the Title I Youth Service Specialist in the Enid area for two and a half years. Collaboration played an important role in creating pathways for the youth to become successful. Referring youth clients to partner agencies that focused on specific needs including transitional housing programs, emergency food providers, utility assistance, counseling services, mental health agencies, family planning resources, clothing closets, and DRS, Rachel was able to assist many youth in finding ways through their crises situations. She also provided encouragement that they could achieve something greater. Rachel collaborated with referring agencies as well, often enrolling participants who were referred from other community partners including OJA, TANF, YouthBuild, and Local Alternative Education programs.

In the brief time that Rachel has been working in workforce development, she has had a great impact on the current and future workforce of the area. Through collaboration and coordination, Rachel has assisted more than 30 youth to obtain their high school diplomas, she placed several youth into work experiences, tutored numerous youth to help them increase literacy or numeracy skills, and offered her translating ability to job seekers in the Enid workforce office and to RX for Oklahoma in assisting clients to apply for the Healthcare Marketplace. Rachel truly has a heart for service and providing young people with ideas to help them understand ways to improve their situations. It has been an honor working with Rachel to create the lasting partnerships that WIOA envisions for the area.



2017
BUSINESS LEADER OF THE YEAR

**South Central Oklahoma
Workforce Development Area**

Chuck Ralls
City of Comanche, OK

Mr. Ralls reached out to ResCare after TDS attended a City of Comanche Chamber meeting in an effort to find employment for clients in that area. He stated he might be interested in helping clients in that area find work and become productive citizens.

Since that time the City of Comanche has been a Worksite for two Work Experience participants. Mr. Ralls has taken risks that most businesses will not by allowing a client with a criminal background to work for him and begin to demonstrate herself as trustworthy and employable. He then allowed another young and inexperienced client to transfer from the assigned Work Experience position into a more specialized area of employment. Mr. Ralls later hired that client as a city employee and sent him to four weeks of training for Waste Water Management.

In addition to assisting ResCare with the WIOA program, Mr. Ralls is very supportive of the Jobs for Life organization in Comanche.

One lucky WIOA client now has a career path that he had never even heard of before. Another of our clients has gained valuable work experience needed to enter the workforce.



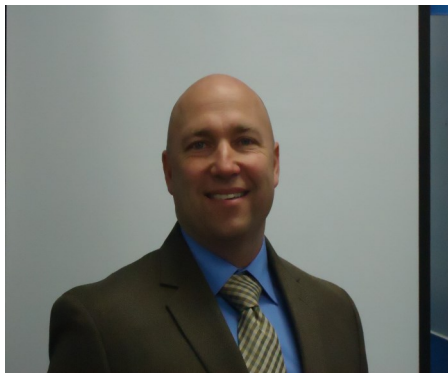
2017 BUSINESS LEADER OF THE YEAR

**Southern Oklahoma
Workforce Investment Area
Harolynn Wofford
PSO**

Harolynn Wofford was born in Hugo, OK, raised and attended school in Rattan, graduating as Salutatorian of her class. After high school, she attended Cosmetology school and received her license, went to work and owned and operated her own business for over 10 years. During this time, and upon some advice and counseling from her grandmother and aunt, she attended college. While working three jobs, running her business and going to school at night, she raised her son and got her degree. She has passed that good advice and counseling along to many young people and encourages education, job skills, and work ethic at every chance.

After teaching a couple of years, she got the opportunity to go to work for Public Service Company of Oklahoma. During her 33 years with PSO, she has worked in Customer Service, Residential Marketing, Commercial and Industrial Marketing and is now External Affairs Manager for McAlester District South. She was asked to serve on the Southern Workforce Board and gladly accepted. Working to help people further their education, skills, and employability is very high on her list of "to dos". She volunteers her time on numerous other boards: Little Dixie, Choctaw County Coalition, Hugo and Pushmataha County Chambers of Commerce, Idabel Main Street, Boys and Girls Club, and Oklahoma Southeast, to name a few. She believes economic development, jobs, training and education are worth the time and effort you put into promoting them. She also ranks community development as one of her priorities and serves as the Beautification chair for Hugo Chamber and President of the Iris Garden Club in Hugo.

Harolynn holds a BS degree in Education from Southeastern Oklahoma State University, is a licensed cosmetologist, a certified KASET trainer and is a Master Gardener. She and her husband Jerry reside in Hugo, where they are very active in community work and projects.



2017 BUSINESS LEADER OF THE YEAR

Southwest Oklahoma Workforce Development Area

**Mike Hixson
AEP/PSO**

Mr. Mike Hixson, External/Community Affairs Manager at Public Service Company of Oklahoma (PSO), is a member of the Clinton Chamber of Commerce, Elk City Chamber of Commerce, Oklahoma Southwest Alliance, formerly a Southwest Oklahoma Workforce Board Member since 2014 and currently a Western Oklahoma Workforce Board Member.

PSO, a unit of American Electric Power (AEP), is an electric utility company serving more than 540,000 customers in eastern and southwestern Oklahoma. AEP is committed to operating as a good citizen of the communities where it does business. The AEP/PSO professionals live and work in these communities, serving as AEP's local contacts with community, governmental and business leaders.

AEP has training alliances with various vocational and technical schools across Oklahoma. They work with these institutions to develop academic programs needed to prepare students for high-paying jobs in the utility industry. Internships are available in partnership with some technical schools, depending on opportunities in each AEP location. AEP/PSO has a college co-op or intern program that gives young people the opportunity to work alongside experienced professionals in their career area. Joining with key partners across Oklahoma, PSO recognizes the importance of early learning as a foundation for success in school. The sixth annual Bright Start, Right Start Preschool Teacher Science Workshop was conducted last summer to incorporate science into the preschool curriculum. PSO also partners with teachers in their service areas to enrich reading and math programs. Mr. Hixson brought by an armful of children's books for Michael's Corner at the Weatherford Food Resource Center, and to the Clinton and Weatherford Head Start Centers. This cordial gesture was done in celebration of Week of the Young Child. AEP helps grades Pre-K to 12 educators learn the latest about the science, technology, and infrastructure surrounding electricity. To help in that effort, AEP offers electrical safety education, teacher vision grants, energy education and electric universe programs.

To recognize and encourage community engagement, the PSO CONNECTS program provides mini-grants to nonprofit organizations and schools where employees and retirees volunteer. Beyond employee volunteerism, PSO provides financial support to many organizations that contribute to the well-being and vitality of their communities. They also award grants from the AEP Foundation to education, human services and arts endeavors. In 2016, PSO's contributions to nonprofits and economic development, plus AEP Foundation grants on behalf of PSO, totaled more than \$930,000, including pre-K through higher education, basic human needs, arts and culture, and mini-grants to community organizations for economic development efforts.

Accepting a full-time job with AEP doesn't mean the end of the employee's formal education or career development. AEP/PSO strongly encourages and supports ongoing education and learning, both on and off the job, through a variety of special programs, such as, the Educational Assistance Program, DeVry Corporate Education Program, ConSem Education Program, Web-based Training and Leadership Development Activities. AEP/PSO also offers a number of skill-building programs designed to help employees stay at the top of their field, along with safety training to keep employees working safely.



2017
BUSINESS LEADER OF THE YEAR
Tulsa Oklahoma
Workforce Development Area
Ren Barger

Ren Barger is the Founder and CEO of Tulsa Hub, who partners with Workforce Tulsa to help biking be an attainable and affordable method of transportation, so the Tulsa community can access more employment opportunities and be self-sufficient. At Tulsa Hub, we recognize that transportation is one of the major broken links in the chain of workforce development. A bicycle is a simple yet powerful tool utilized to empower people to be productive, engaged citizens. We help over 200 adults every year earn bicycles, equipment and education with ongoing support, while working with hundreds more to provide low-cost repair services, regardless of their ability to pay.

Tulsa Hub is a proud partner with Workforce Tulsa. We permanently hired two talented graduates of our Adult Cycling Empowerment (ACE) “earn-a-bike” program, thanks to Workforce Tulsa’s ability to use work experience and on the job training funds. Tulsa Hub has hired ⅓ of its staff from ACE graduates, which speaks to our dedication to impact underserved populations. It’s a natural partnership with Workforce Tulsa because together we can comprehensively serve our community.

Additional partnering agencies include John 3:16, Center for Employment Opportunities, ACTION, and Tulsa Welding School, who join forces to provide access to bicycles. One of our program graduates from Tulsa Welding School, Gene, was featured on channel 8 news recently, saying that “not having to walk back and forth to welding school” made all the difference for him.

We also operate an after school bike club at elementary schools and an internship program with multiple middle and high schools to allow students to learn bike mechanic skills in our shop. Additionally, downtown Tulsa has a new Bike Share transit system and Tulsa Hub has been contracted to run the maintenance and operations for the entire fleet for at least the first three years.

Tulsa Hub is proud to have taken advantage of the multitude of resources available for nonprofit development and workforce education. Since our inception, we have attended every Sarkeys Foundation Southwest Regional Leadership Forum. Staff and board members have attended various Oklahoma Center for Nonprofits workshops including Board Governance, Outcomes Measurement, Financial Best Practices and Fundraising. Two staff members completed the Center’s Standards of Excellence in Nonprofit Management training. Ren Barger has been a keynote speaker at 3 national conferences, including the League of American Bicyclists Forum on Women and Cycling, Bike Pittsburg’s Women’s Bike Summit, and BikeWalkKC Women’s Bike Summit. This training allows staff to develop and effectively give back to the community.

Overall, Tulsa Hub provides an opportunity for people to buy or work for low-cost bicycles, equipment, and repairs in order to access employment. Roughly 70% of respondents from the 2015-2017 ACE survey said “yes” that the use of their bicycle had allowed them to become employed or earn revenue at some point since their earning of the bike. Tulsa Hub’s commitment to partnering, serving, and leading multiple community initiatives directly speak to the impact that their organization has in the Tulsa workforce development area.



“SUCCESS IS NOT FINAL,
FAILURE IS NOT FATAL:
IT IS THE COURAGE TO CONTINUE
THAT COUNTS”

WINSTON CHURCHILL

1874—1965

2017 Workforce Champions

On behalf of the Oklahoma Association of Workforce
Development Boards (OAWDB) and the
Oklahoma Workforce Association (OWA),
the
2017 WORKFORCE CHAMPION awards
will be presented to an outstanding Business Champion
and a Workforce System Champion
in
appreciation and recognition of
**“OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP AND DEDICATION
TO
OKLAHOMA’S WORKFORCE SYSTEM.”**



CREATING OKLAHOMA'S WORKFORCE ADVANTAGE

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL FOR WORKFORCE

AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The **Governor's Council for Workforce and Economic Development** brings together leaders from across a variety of private and public sector organizations to develop a strategy for accelerated economic growth which is for Oklahoma to have a competitive advantage through integrated workforce and economic development objectives. The Council will achieve this vision through its mission to advance a demand-driven and economic development system.

THE STRATEGY

Vision:

Oklahoma as a competitive advantage through integrated workforce and economic development objectives.

Mission:

Oklahoma advances a demand-driven workforce and economic development system.

Result:

Oklahoma achieves wealth-creation for business and individuals.

OKLAHOMA ASSOCIATION OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARDS

The **Oklahoma Association of Workforce Development Boards (OAWDB)** is a non-profit organization representing the 8 Workforce Development Boards, over 40 Workforce Oklahoma Career Centers and other workforce development partners in Oklahoma. Our members include business, local non-profits, government, educational institutions and community-based organizations involved in training, education, economic development and employment. Oklahoma's Workforce Development Boards are private sector-led boards focused on strategic solutions to workforce issues in their regions. OAWDB's mission is to promote, enhance and serve the interests of local workforce development partnerships in Oklahoma.

At the state and federal levels, OAWDB represents the voice of the local system to ensure that policy and administrative decisions are made with the full understanding of the implications of implementation. On the local level, we work to support and improve regional and community system building through the provision of a broad spectrum of policy comments and guidance, board-to-board technical assistance and access to a peer network of practitioners around the state.

Promoting the interests of the local workforce development delivery system is OAWDB's top priority. Advocacy is conducted with the Governor's Council for Workforce and Economic Development (GCWED), state and federal workforce development oversight agencies and those who administer various workforce development, economic development or job training initiatives. OAWDB provides information about workforce development policy as requested, by state and federal legislators and their staff or remarks according to OAWDB's strategic position.

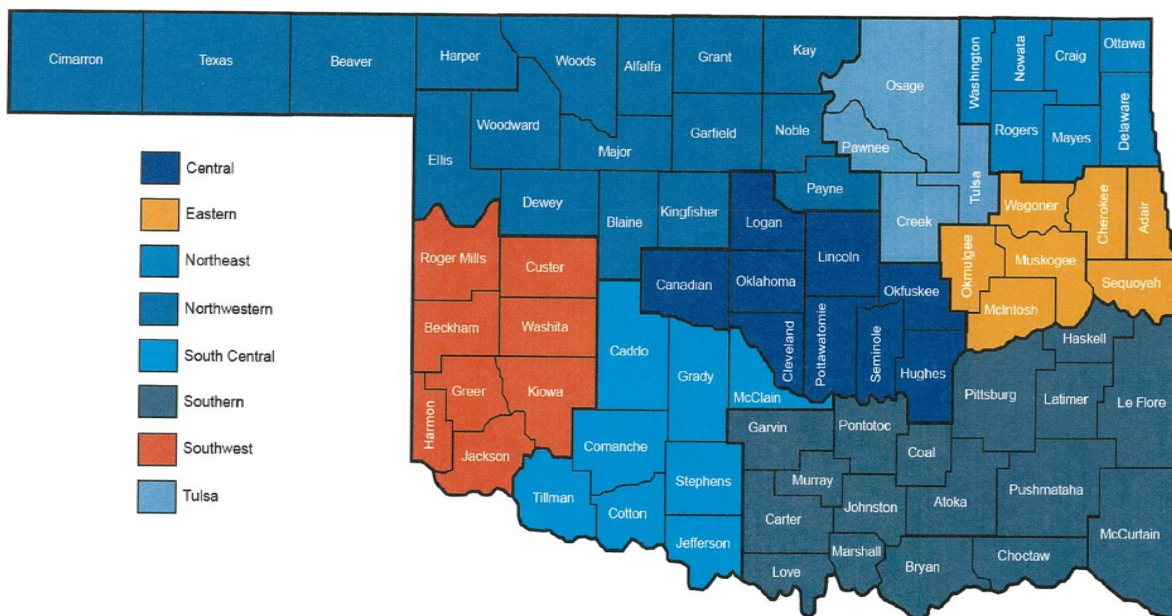
OAWDB acquires, interprets and distributes to the membership the most up-to-date information on workforce development, economic development, education, business trends, welfare reform and related initiatives. By keeping the system informed, members are prepared to play an important role in the local design of the various workforce development strategies.

OKLAHOMA'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARDS

Today, employers and job seekers are plagued by a skills mismatch. Communities that can create an effective, on-going talent pipeline that ensures there are workers with the right skills to meet the ever changing needs of businesses can grow and remain competitive. For Oklahoma to have a truly world class workforce/talent development system, the Governor, along with State Agency Workforce Partners, realized that all involved must go beyond being a "collection of hard working, effective individual agencies" and become an "efficient, effective system providing seamless and comprehensive services". To create this system, the decision was introduced to use the established and proven network of Workforce Development Boards to look at the system holistically and be the convener.

The boards, being business driven, recognized that a systems approach for Oklahoma creates not only a more effective service delivery approach for Oklahoma citizens and business, but a true competitive advantage for Oklahoma's economic development efforts; thus meeting their strategic vision that "Oklahoma's workforce development system increases profitability for businesses and increase income for all Oklahomans".

Oklahoma Workforce Development Areas



OKLAHOMA WORKFORCE ASSOCIATION



The **Oklahoma Workforce Association (OWA)** is a non-profit organization representing the eight Workforce Development Areas in Oklahoma. Our members include WDB staff, fiscal agents, service providers, and front line staff who are engaged in the development and delivery of the state's workforce system. OWA's membership is currently expanding to include workforce professionals from Workforce System Partners, at the present time including the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission (OESC), the Department of Human Services (DHS), Higher Education, Adult Basic Education, Department of Career and Technology Education, and the Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS). OWA's Executive Committee and longtime members welcome new members from all system partners.

OWA promotes economic and social improvements in the state through the provisions of high quality employment and training services in close cooperation with appropriate federal, state and local authorities.

OWA also supports the collective interests of the Association's members in employment and training matters affecting the professional lives of employment and training personnel by acting as a focal point for receiving or obtaining employment and training information, deliberating issues arising from such information and for deciding upon appropriate courses of action according to the desires of the Association membership.

Functions of OWA are:

- To provide a forum through which to achieve a regular and effective exchange of ideas, information and experiences between the staffs of the designated Workforce Development Areas, Regional Workforce Development Boards, and our workforce partners.
- To encourage a spirit of cooperation and develop the practice of professionalism on the part of employment and training staff members through meetings, workshops, self-evaluation and such other organizational activities as may contribute to the improvement of Workforce Development Areas.
- To formalize viewpoints and comments on existing and proposed employment and training programs, plans and policies and when requested, or as decided by the Association membership, advise or recommend changes as are pertinent and meaningful, in terms of improved delivery of employment and training services, to appropriate authorities.
- To maintain cognizance of significant employment and training program developments including but not limited to, such categories as training programs; operating methods and techniques; new legislation; federal and state rules and regulations; program changes; opportunities for coordination linkage, and mutual support among employment and training agencies; program effectiveness; employment and training staff salary scales; trends in the employment and training needs of the state and local areas; and such other matters as may be determined by the Executive Committee—all for the purpose of determining appropriate action by the Association in the interest of improved delivery of employment and training services.

OWA is dedicated to Workforce Excellence in Oklahoma

2017 OKLAHOMA WORKS CELEBRATION COMMITTEE



COMMITTEE CHAIR

MICHELLE BISH, NORTHEAST WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Bill Bryant	Central Oklahoma Workforce Development Area
Jeane Burruss	Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development
Linda Emrich	Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development
Gretchen Evans	Northeast Workforce Development Area
Melinda Fruendt	Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services
Renee Sansom	Oklahoma Rehabilitation Council
Ashley Sellers	Central Oklahoma Workforce Development Area
Kerry Manning	Southern Workforce Development Area
Jeremy Zeller	Oklahoma Department of Commerce



**WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING
WORKFORCE PARTNERS**

AMERICAN JOB CENTER NETWORK

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL FOR WORKFORCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

OKLAHOMA ASSOCIATION OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARDS

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF REHABILITATION SERVICES

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS ADMINISTRATION

OKLAHOMA EMPLOYMENT SECURITY COMMISSION

OKLAHOMA HEALTH CARE AUTHORITY

OKLAHOMA OFFICE OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OKLAHOMA STATE REGENTS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY—OKLAHOMA CITY

OKLAHOMA TRIBAL WORKFORCE EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING ADVISORY COUNCIL

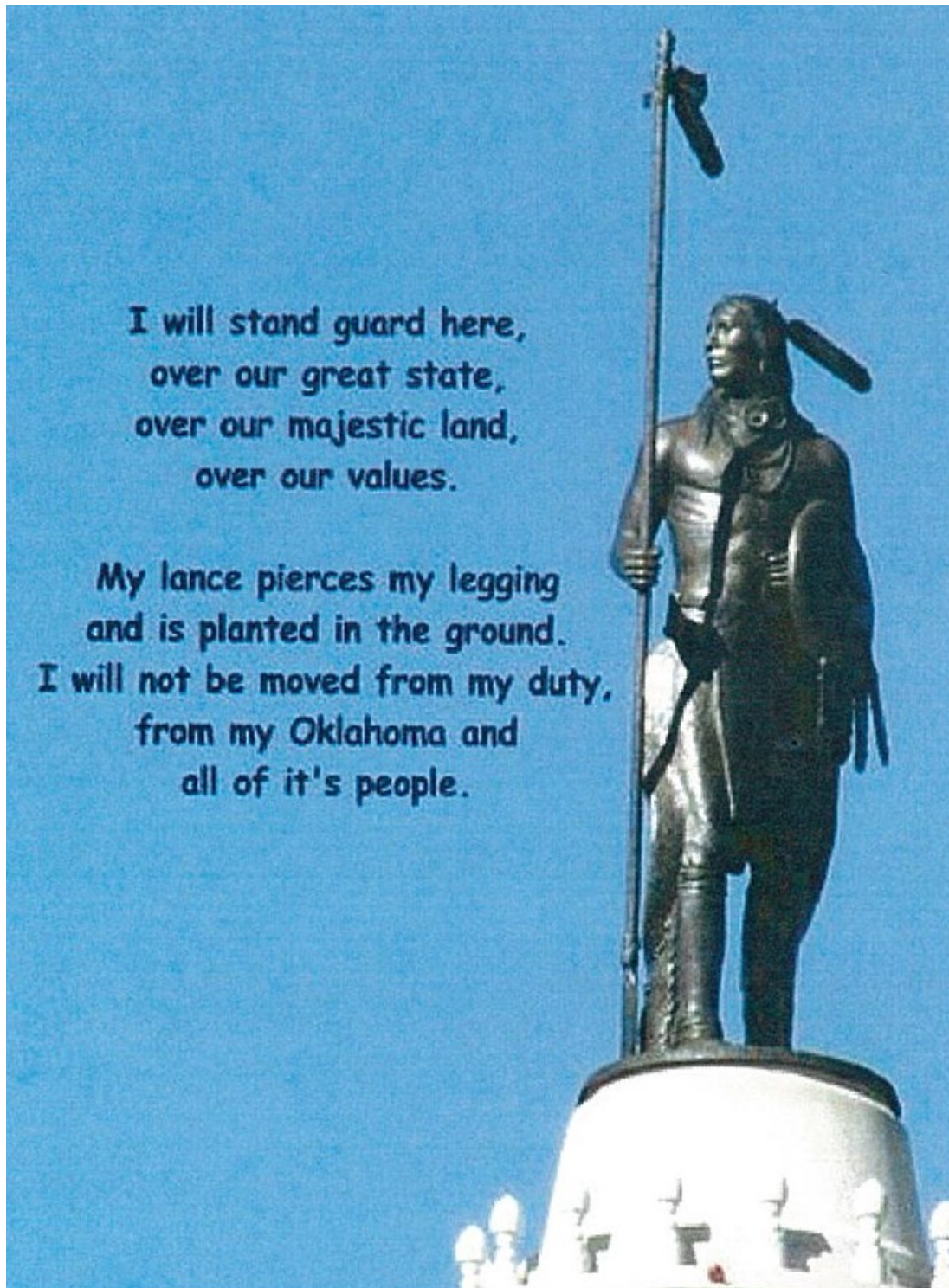
OKLAHOMA WORKFORCE ASSOCIATION

SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

**SPECIAL THANKS TO THE
OKLAHOMA EMPLOYMENT SECURITY COMMISSION PRINT SHOP STAFF**

**Thank you for attending the
2017 Oklahoma Works Alumni Celebration!**

**Your attendance today was greatly appreciated.
Please join us in the Fourth Floor Rotunda for a Reception
honoring the 2017 Alumni and Business Leaders of the Year.**



“THE GUARDIAN”

ON TOP OF THE STATE CAPITOL

**THE
STATE OF OKLAHOMA
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

I salute the flag of the State of Oklahoma.
Its symbols of peace unite all people.



**WIOA Programs are Equal Opportunity Employers/Programs
Auxiliary Aids and Services are Available upon Request to Individuals with Disabilities**

This program was financed in whole or in part by funds from the U.S. Department of Labor .